

682 settlement is usually made after the parties have agreed to it,
627 yet, in certain instances where one of the parties later feels that
672 the settlement was not just or that he was coerced into accepting
695 it, he may ask for a second Mi'ad during which new procedures start

682 in the case. In the present case, although Mahdi had originally
672 accepted the judgment of the awaqil, as time passed and he real-
695 ized that he was unable to pay the bloodmoney, he started to ques-
554 tion the feasibility of the settlement. He discussed the matter
792 with Sheikh Suliman el-Gerery from the Murabiteen tribe of Gerera,
(776) a tribe whose members are feared throughout the area for the belief

613 that they have certain supernatural powers. Sheikh Suliman himself
517 is highly respected, and people believe that after his death he will
571 become "wali" or a saint. After hearing Mahdi's complaint, Sheikh
443 Suliman told him that the settlement was unjust and told him that he
576 would do something about it. The following Thursday, Sheikh Suliman
called on Mahdi and asked him to bring his donkey and follow him.
They rode to a small desert town called Bahig where the local market
is held every Thursday. On market day, the awaqil of various tribal
segments usually gather in front of the general store in the town
drinking tea and chatting until their sons or the younger members
of their families sell the sheep and buy the necessary items. Every-
one passing by the gathering is expected to greet the gathering, get-
ting off his donkey as a sign of respect to the prominent people.

• (689) Failure to greet a fellow tribesman is considered a serious offense
liable to a fine of more than L. 50 and ten goats in certain cases.

(673) It is considered a very serious crime. One informant once told me,
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124 One informant once told me,
576 "If you don't greet me, this means that you hate me, and if you
829 hate me, there is no limit to the kind of harm you can do me and
my family. One who hates you can kill you, and none can walk
safely anywhere if he fears that he will be killed."

682 As Sheikh Suliman and Mahdi reached the general store, every-
689 one was gathering there as usual, including the two awaqil who
672 were involved in the original settlement. Sheikh Suliman told
695 Mahdi not to dismount his donkey and not to say the customary
554 greeting as they passed by the gathering. When they passed the
792 gathering, everyone stood to greet Sheikh Suliman who ignored them
576 and left with Mahdi. No one believed that Sheikh Suliman, who
should be the guard of the tribal tradition, should commit such an
unforgivable violation of the norms of the people. The next morn-
682 ing the whole area was talking about a big Mi'ad to "take the right"
689 from Sheikh Suliman and Mahdi, who had insulted the gathering. The
672 Mi'ad was held a week after the incident. During the Mi'ad, Sheikh
695 Suliman was asked to explain his behavior, and his answer was, "How
554 do you want me to greet all those people who were sitting in front
792 of the store? There were more than thirty men in that gathering,
576 and I was afraid that if I said the customary greeting, I might
627 have startled some of them causing them to harm themselves, leaving
me with the payment of so many bloodmoneys." Immediately, the
attendants of the Mi'ad knew what Sheikh Suliman was referring to,
and that his action was to prove that the settlement reached in
the case of Mahdi was wrong and that it set a very dangerous prece-
dent which would cause people to avoid greeting one another, "and
hatred will prevail among brothers and nobody will be safe in his
own home."

105 On the other hand, there is always a feeling of rivalry and hostility
598 between the different tribal segments which goes back to the era of
571 tribal warfare. Thus, the social relations among the tribal population
are characterized by a certain amount of ambivalence which is hidden be-
hind a facade of formality in the way tribal members treat one another
in day-to-day activities. There are certain rules of etiquette describ-
105 ing the way members of the same tribal segment should behave toward one
571 another and toward other tribesmen and outsiders. Failure to abide by
576 these rules may subject the violator to a symbolic fine of a goat or a
[89] sheep slaughtered for a feast to which everyone is invited. These feasts,
[82] or dinners as they are called, have various functions, the most important
105 of which is the integrative one. In an area where the population is usu-
571 ally dispersed, these dinners offer an opportunity to the tribesmen who
574 happen to be in the area at the time of the feast to attend, where they
182 eat, meet other tribesmen, and exchange information about what is happen-
ing in other parts of the area. It is from such dinners that the tribes-
men get to know about the available pastures, about the prices of sheep
and goats in different markets, and about who is doing what and where.
The occasion also signifies the restoration of the violator of the rules
to the social life of the group and the reinforcement of those rules.

105 This is also true with the tribal meetings, or mi'ad, which are held to
629 announce settlements in more serious cases. It is on this basis that
182 the mi'ad should not be considered as a tribal court. It is more of a
[81] social occasion where food and drinks are served and where parties in-
volved and all those invited by them talk about everything except the
[80] dispute itself. In certain instances, the financial settlement agreed
upon in the informal mediation is exaggerated when announced in the mi'ad